

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 21610

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, UR, SY, LE
SUBJECT: SOVIET BRIEFING ON KHADDAM VISIT: SHORT ON
DETAILS

REF: MOSCOW 21128

SUMMARY: SOVIET MFA OFFICIAL SAYS THAT KHADDAM
VISIT WAS REQUESTED BY SYRIANS TO DISCUSS MIDDLE
EAST SITUATION ON EVE OF CAMP DAVID MEETING AS
WELL AS CURRENT SITUATION IN LEBANON. SOVIET
SOURCE SAYS THAT SOVIETS EXPRESSED THEIR OWN CONCERN
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OVER LEBANESE SITUATION BUT ONLY IN GENERAL WAY.
END SUMMARY.

1. ON SEPTEMBER 7 EMBOFF CALLED ON COUNSELOR V. I.
KOLOTUSHA, MFA NEAR EASTERN COUNTRIES DEPT. (SYRIA-
LEBANON), TO DISCUSS RECENT MOSCOW VISIT OF SYRIAN
FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM. KOLOTUSHA DELIBERATELY

KEPT HIS REMARKS GENERAL, BUT MAIN POINTS MAY STILL BE OF INTEREST.

2. KOLOTUSHA SAID THAT VISIT WAS AT SYRIAN INITIATIVE AND WAS ARRANGED RATHER HURRIEDLY (KOLOTUSHA HIMSELF WAS CALLED BACK FROM VACATION TO WORK ON VISIT -- A DECIDEDLY UN-SOVIET PRACTICE). SYRIAN INTENTIONS WERE TWO-FOLD: A) TO DISCUSS THE GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION ON THE EVE OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING, AND B) TO DISCUSS VOLATILE LEBANESE SITUATION.

3. ON CAMP DAVID, SAID KOLOTUSHA, SOVIET AND SYRIAN VIEWS "COINCIDED." BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT CAMP DAVID OUTCOME -- NO MATTER HOW MODEST -- WOULD MAKE ACHIEVEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT HARDER, NOT EASIER, TO ACHIEVE. THIS WAS SO DUE TO DIFFICULTY OF OTHER ARABS -- ESPECIALLY SYRIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS -- IN ACCEPTING ANYTHING NEGOTIATED IN "SEPARATE" FORUM.

4. EMBOFF NOTED RECENT GROMYKO REMARKS ABOUT GENEVA CONFERENCE (IN AUGUST 30 SPEECH TO KHADDAM AND SEPTEMBER 5 SPEECH TO GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER RALLIS) AND ASKED IF SYRIAN AND SOVIET VIEWS ALSO "COINCIDED" IN THAT REGARD. KOLOTUSHA SPOKE OF "GENERAL AGREEMENT" AND SAID THAT GENEVA HAD NOT BEEN EMPHASIZED

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IN TALKS THEMSELVES. GENEVA CONVOCATION, HE SAID, WAS OBVIOUSLY UNREALISTIC AT PRESENT MOMENT DUE TO PRESENT STATE OF ARAB DISUNITY BUT IT STILL REMAINED KEY POINT OF SOVIET POLICY.

5. THE SITUATION IN LEBANON, SAID KOLOTUSHA, HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AS ONE OF THE MANY UNRESOLVED POLITICAL ISSUES OF THE MIDDLE EAST. THE SYRIANS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN OVER CONTINUED ISRAELI SUPPORT OF CHRISTIAN-RIGHTIST FORCES AND OVER POSSIBLE ISRAELI-INSPIRED PROVOCATIONS IN LEBANON. THE SOVIET SIDE HAD ALSO EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN OVER THE TENSE SITUATION IN LEBANON, BUT ONLY IN A GENERAL WAY. ASKED TO ELABORATE ON DEGREE OF SOVIET CONCERN AND SPECIFIC MANNER IN WHICH IT HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO SYRIANS, EITHER DURING KHADDAM VISIT OR AFTERWARD, KOLOTUSHA SAID ONLY THAT SOVIET CONCERN HAD BEEN EXPRESSED IN GENERAL CONTEXT OF DISCUSSION OF LEBANESE SITUATION AND THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN PRESENTED IN A "DETAILED" MANNER.

6. KOLOTUSHA DID NOT RAISE THE THEME OF A U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST DESPITE THE

OMNIPRESENT NATURE OF THAT THEME IN SOVIET MEDIA
COVERAGE OF THE CAMP DAVID TALKS AS WELL AS
GROMYKO'S AUGUST 30 SPEECH REFERENCE TO IT. NOR
DID KOLOTUSHA PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE
SOVIET-SYRIAN CONSULTATION ON RECENT SYRIAN
TACTICAL MOVES (E.G., MOVEMENT OF AA GUNS AND
KHADDAM CALL FOR "SOVIET-ARAB DEFENSE PACT").
GARRISON

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